

URGENT ACTION

WORLD CUP EX-MEDIA MANAGER UNFAIRLY TRIED

Jordanian national Abdullah Ibhais is serving a three-year prison sentence following an unfair trial in Qatar, that was based on his so-called confession which he claims was obtained coercively. On 15 December 2021, the Court of Appeal upheld his conviction on charges including misuse of public funds and reduced his prison sentence from five to three years. He is now appealing his case before the Court of Cassation. Amnesty International calls on the Qatari authorities to quash Abdullah Ibhais' sentence and grant his immediate release.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani

Prime Minister and Minister of Interior

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Your Excellency,

Abdullah Ibhais, a Jordanian national and former communications director for Qatar's 2022 World Cup organizers, the 'Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy', is serving an unjust three-year prison sentence following an unfair trial.

Officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and of the State Security arrested Abdullah Ibhais at his place of work on 12 November 2019. He was taken to the CID offices in Duhail, in northern Doha, the capital, and interrogated by State Security officers who denied him access to a lawyer for nine days, despite his requests. The officers threatened Abdullah Ibhais with detention for six months without access to a lawyer or his family, physical abuse, and threatened his family's safety and security should he refuse signing the pre-written "confession" presented to him, which he ultimately did. The next day, Abdullah Ibhais appeared before the State Security Prosecution where he denied the "confession" he had signed the previous day but was pressured again into signing the document. He was charged with misuse of public funds, bribery, collusion to commit bribery, and causing harm to the Supreme Committee.

He was released on bail on 21 December 2019. On 29 April 2021 a court of First Instance convicted and sentenced him to five years in prison and ordered him to pay a fine of 150,000 Qatari riyals (US\$41,197). He was arrested again on 15 November 2021, while awaiting the start of his appeal trial. He immediately went on hunger strike, which lasted for 30 days, in protest of his detention and lost 20 kgs. On 15 December 2021, the Qatari Court of Appeal upheld his conviction and reduced his prison sentence from five to three years. He is now appealing his case before the Court of Cassation. He remains held in Doha Central prison.

Abdullah Ibhais's trial was unfair as it was based on a "confession" that he told the judge was obtained through threat of violence and coercion. Both the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal failed to investigate his allegations of coerced confession and instead accepted it as inculpatory evidence against him.

I urge you to quash Abdullah Ibhais's conviction and immediately release him. Allegations that he has been threatened and coerced into making incriminating confessions must be independently and effectively investigated, and if verified, those suspected to be responsible for these acts must be held to account.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdullah Ibhais (36) is a Jordanian national and father of two boys, aged four and six. He is the former communications director for Qatar's 2022 World Cup organizers, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, a government body in charge of planning and delivering the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

He was arrested on 12 November 2019 and taken to the CID offices in Duhail, in northern Doha, where he was interrogated by State Security officers. Later that day, Abdullah Ibhais was taken to his home while CID officers searched his house and confiscated his electronic devices. Nine days into his detention, Abdullah Ibhais was finally granted access to a lawyer. He was released on bail on 21 December 2019 pending trial. His case was transferred to another authority and no longer considered a matter of state security.

Abdullah Ibhais's trial before a court of First Instance began in January 2020. Abdullah Ibhais retracted his "confession" claiming it was extracted under threat and coercion, and during interrogations that were held in the absence of a lawyer. The court did not investigate his claims and instead accepted the "confession" as evidence against him. After hearing four out of at least 10 witnesses, the judge halted the hearing sessions and refused to hear the defense in court and gave Abdullah Ibhais's lawyer a few days to submit his defense in writing.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 April 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Abdullah Ibhais (he/him)